

Recommendations

Evaluation requires specific, committed resources. The framework the WG has developed highlights the potential value of good evaluation for interventions, as it allows for both ongoing improvement and the capacity to build on the accumulated knowledge acquired by others.

In 1999, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommended that 10% of the total budget for a comprehensive tobacco control programme should be allocated for evaluation and surveillance. The CDC recommendation was recently endorsed by WHO and represents a reasonable benchmark for governments to adopt.

The WG strongly recommends that countries allocate adequate funds for evaluation and surveillance activities. Where a budget for tobacco control programmes exists, we recommend that an adequate percentage of it be earmarked for evaluation and surveillance.

Evaluation needs to begin with an understanding of the nature of the interventions being evaluated. Collection of this information, especially for international studies, is surprisingly difficult. Collective effort, especially by agencies with networks into appropriate government agencies, could make it

easier to collect this information, and do so in a consistent manner.

The WG recommends that high priority be given to the development and maintenance of a reliable and accurate international system for tracking tobacco control policies.

Also critical for the field to move forward is for sufficient attention and resources to be provided to knowledge utilisation, which in this domain would include appropriate detailed documentation of the results and all the features of evaluation studies, so as to allow the information to be compared and summative evaluations made. Development of a repository to collect and organise this information is becoming increasingly important. Complementing the repository of evaluations should be a similar repository of measures, with information as to their validity in the various contexts where they might be useful. The utility of such a repository would be enhanced by the development and agreement on use of prototype proformas for reporting on the validity data on measures, and on frequently repeated interventions, such as mass media campaigns. This will facilitate their combination into meta-analytic studies, especially important for

understanding where and when things work. The continued momentum of the WHO FCTC and of the broader movement to fight against the global tobacco epidemic can be facilitated by the existence of such a repository, with appropriate tools for easy access and utilisation of the contents of the repository. Articles 20 and 22 of the WHO FCTC effectively call for such an initiative. Those conducting or sponsoring evaluations should be encouraged to add appropriate information to this repository.

The WG recommends that a repository be created and maintained to collect detailed documentation of the methods and results of tobacco control policy surveillance and evaluation studies, particularly those related to WHO FCTC policies.

The WG recommends that governments work together to support efforts to develop common methods and measures to support evaluations of tobacco control policies.

Governments should be encouraged to collect data from the tobacco industry to help evaluate current and future tobacco control policies, and to assist in identifying tobacco industry actions that might counteract the effects of

tobacco control policies. The kind of information that should be readily available from the industry and placed into the public repository includes disaggregated sub-brand specific marketing activities, product sales data and product content, design and performance data. It might also include more general information on political contributions, funding of scientists, general sponsorships and other activities of the industry that are designed to affect the environment in which they operate.

The WG recommends that governments mandate that tobacco companies provide them with information that might

facilitate the evaluation of tobacco control policies and help identify the potential for new policies.

There are substantial infrastructure and information needs that are essential to conducting successful policy evaluations and supporting the dissemination and utilisation of evaluation results. Ongoing surveillance is required to assess the impact of tobacco control policies on the tobacco product market and on the population, as well as to detect industry responses to policies and other unanticipated consequences.

The WG recommends that countries interested in developing a tobacco control surveillance

system be encouraged to join one of the international systems. Those countries that have existing national surveys are encouraged to link to these international efforts.

The information resources called for here should make important sources of data accessible and useable for informing policy, development, implementation and evaluation. Additionally, specific dissemination strategies should be employed to make relevant information useful to policy-makers, public health practitioners and the general public.